

Gives Me Hot Cold Fever

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Gives Me Hot Cold Fever

by [HotCrossPigeon](#)

Summary

In which Aziraphale discovers that the Serpent of Eden is venomous.

And Crowley panics.

Of Bow ties and Bites

Chapter Notes

I'll get back to my other story in a bit, I swear...

Meanwhile, this one has more humour, less angst (though maybe a bit, because I can't help myself), and all the hurt/comfort!

I really hope you like it :)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Crowley was currently napping in the bookshop, or more specifically, in the uppermost drawer of the angel's desk.

It was warm and dark, and had the added benefit of smelling a lot like Aziraphale.

That is to say, it smelled a little bit like dust motes dancing in a hazy beam of sunlight, a little bit like a fat yellow tulip with a fuzzy bumblebee's bottom poking out of it, a little bit like damp musty yellowed pages, and old books with spines so brittle they crack when they're opened like old tree bark, a little bit like impossibly old wine and posh chocolates and steeped tea leaves.

All of these together - with the underlying spark and zap of something decidedly not quite human, that tingled at Crowley's serpent tongue pleasantly - painted the picture of Aziraphale, for this drawer was where the Principality, Guardian of the Eastern Gate of Eden, kept his impeccable collection of bow ties.

They were neatly folded, and in order of colour, and upon opening the drawer appeared like a muted rainbow. To the right, lay an impressive column of the exact same tartan bow tie, but to the left side, there were plain ones of soft blue, pastel green, off-white, beige and brown. There was a dazzling cream with sparkling golden thread, a ludicrously comfy periwinkle blue in brushed cotton, and the stupid Christmas themed one that Crowley had bought him once, that had tiny little angels on it, blowing tiny little heavenly trumpets.

Crowley hadn't seen it in years, and was remarkably touched that the angel hadn't just thrown it in the bin, because it really was quite hideous.

He was pretty sure it was one of those naff musical ones too, but had no urge to press it too hard in case it went off in the drawer, and the angel came to investigate the sudden off-key, tinny rendition of *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*.

Anyway.

The bow ties were neat and tidy and well-organised, or at least they had been, before Crowley wriggled his way in there and made himself a nest.

It might be pertinent to point out, at this point, that he was currently a snake. His human corporation, though incredibly bendy, wouldn't have fit in the confined space.

As a snake though, he found it quite comfortable.

Yes, this was a sufficient hideyhole to snuggle up in, and allowed his snake form to enrobe itself entirely in the angel's unique scent if he made himself small enough, and, well, it was as close to utter bliss as the demon had ever come.

Apart from that short time period in the eighteenth century, where it had been acceptable to offer the angel his arm and have him put his slightly chubby fingers in the crook of the demon's elbow, while they traversed St James' Park of an afternoon, but that had long since gone out of fashion, unfortunately.

This, Crowley found, was the next best thing.

The demon curled up in complete contentment, and it wasn't creepy at all, despite the fact that as a snake he smelled things by tasting the air, and so was, technically speaking, sitting in a dark drawer and periodically licking at the angel's belongings with a dozy smile on his face. But really, it was just a cosy place to snooze away the day, and he definitely wasn't hiding or sulking, or wishing that the bow ties were a certain angel himself, or anything of that ilk.

So there. Shut it.

He was having a pretty good time of it. That was, until he was abruptly startled out of his snooze by a sudden sharp jostle forward, as if he were in the Bentley and had slammed his foot on the brakes just to see the angel gasp and clutch at the ceiling as they lurched to a stop.

A square of dazzling light appeared in the space above him, causing him to shrink away at its brightness, and then something had quite unexpectedly, and without warning, poked him in the belly.

Snakes, when startled, have a habit of striking.

It was a reflex.

No one had ever attempted to startle Crowley before, not while he was a snake, anyway. And when he struck out, the demon was just as surprised as the poor person who had opened the top drawer when they got a sharp nip for their trouble.

"Ouch!"

Crowley hid. Whoever he'd just bitten tasted an awful lot like bow ties.

Bollocks.

The snake poked his slender head out of the top of the drawer, flickering a tongue out uncertainly. The angel looked surprised, which under the circumstances was understandable,

and was clutching his hand to his chest as if it were one of his prized first editions and Crowley was a particularly overzealous customer.

“Oh, Crowley!” Aziraphale admonished, looking perplexed at the sight of him, “What on *earth* are you doing in there?”

‘Licking your bow ties’ sounded much too sordid now that Crowley thought about it. It was a good job he was still a snake and currently incapable of human speech, because the demon had the uncomfortable habit of just blurting things out sometimes, and he hardly thought that the angel would react kindly to such an admittance.

He just eyed the angel instead, doing his best to look like he wasn’t up to any particular mischief, and it was the angel, in fact, who should apologise for disturbing his very innocent sleep.

His silence was rewarded by the angel’s dithering.

“Come now, I’m very sorry to have frightened you, but really, my dear,” Aziraphale was now inspecting the pad of his manicured thumb, where two tiny bright spots of blood had welled up, “that’s no call for - oh, dear me, I think you’ve broken the skin.”

With that, the angel began fussing about trying to find a plaster. Crowley stared at him unblinkingly with beady golden eyes and tried not to feel guilty.

It wasn’t working. So he settled for being grumpy about it. Stupid angel.

“Now, don’t look at me like that... it’s your own fault for sequestering yourself away in there, of all places. You know full well I like to change my bow tie on Tuesdays - oh, where did I put the blasted things? Ah, here we are.”

Aziraphale had found a small tin first aid kit, probably circa World War One, and was delicately positioning a fabric plaster on the end of his finger, despite the fact it had probably already stopped bleeding. He was an angel after all, he could have just miracled the tiny wound away, but he loved to make a big show of things. He was ridiculous. Crowley hissed out his tongue because he was currently incapable of rolling his eyes.

Aziraphale huffed at him. “Whatever were you doing in there anyway?”

None of his damn business, that was what.

Crowley retreated back into the hideyhole and then peeked out his head again, and a bow tie nosed its way out of the drawer with him. Obviously, that’s what the angel had wanted when he’d opened the drawer, not a couple of fangs to be unexpectedly jabbed into his plump thumb.

Aziraphale’s current tartan bow tie was neatly folded on the top of the desk ready to be exchanged for a different one. Crowley could spy a new, intriguing, tiny triangle of soft skin at the very top of the flustered angel’s throat that would usually be covered by said bow tie, but was now exposed for all to see.

His slitted pupils grew impossibly round.

Ssssss. That sort of thing shouldn't be allowed. Look at that. Just look. Well, he couldn't blink so he was forced to, right? He wondered what that bit of skin would taste like. About a thousand times better than some stupid old bow ties, he bet. But he couldn't exactly slither up there to find out, the angel was bound to notice, and might even think that Crowley was trying to strangle him. Which, yeah, could have been the case, actually, because Aziraphale could be a total tit sometimes and Crowley had threatened him with strangulation enough times that he could very well have just snapped and finally followed through with it.

Anyway. He ought to put all that naked skin away. What if someone else wandered into the bookshop and saw the angel in such a state of debauchery? That was for his eyes only.

Aziraphale offered a fond smile, dimpling pleasantly, "Thank you, my dear." He took the proffered bow tie, with his left hand, the other still tucked against his chest protectively. Then he expertly flipped up his collar and attempted to tie it with deft fingers.

He didn't succeed in the endeavour, having only the use of one hand. Crowley saw the opportunity to get his own fingers close to the angel's neck and that new triangle of tempting angel skin, and all under the guise of being helpful too, and he jumped on it as fast as any striking viper.

The snake turned back into a human so quickly that he nearly got trapped in the drawer. And as it was, his feet were still wedged in there, and he wiggled out in an ungainly fashion and flopped to the floor face first.

"Angel!" The newly formed Crowley yelled into the floorboards that his mouth was squished onto, and then he righted himself, scrambling upwards as quickly as demonically possible. "Angel," he cleared his throat, appearing cool and collected, "let me help you with that."

"Oh, ah, if you would be so kind," said Aziraphale, looking hopelessly amused at his antics, "that would be most appreciated."

If Crowley let his fingers linger around the angel's neck, Aziraphale didn't call him out on it. In fact, he had gone decidedly pinker in the cheeks. "Leassst I can do," murmured Crowley, possibly closer than was strictly necessary as his long fingers pulled at the angel's bow tie to bring him closer still, "Didn't mean to bite you, angel. Wassss half asssleep."

It would take a few more minutes before he got his sibilants under control, his tongue was still a little forked at the end.

"No harm done," insisted Aziraphale, much too cheerfully for having been bitten by a very scary and imposing adversary not moments before, "I was merely startled. Perhaps I should know better than to open my own drawers, and delve blindly into them, without looking to see if there's a wily serpent hiding in there first."

Crowley had the distinct impression he was being teased, and that the angel knew more about Crowley's habits of hiding in the nooks and crannies of Aziraphale's bookshop than he let on.

“I had wondered where you’d been all this time, my dear, I’ve found myself missing your company, quite dreadfully.”

It wasn’t unusual for Crowley to find somewhere warm and safe and hide out for days at a time, especially somewhere inside the bookshop with the angel close by, with or without said angel’s knowledge.

He’d once spent three weeks coiled up inside the angel’s tea cupboard, so tiny he could have been mistaken for a particularly stubborn hair. This was back when Aziraphale had cultivated a special affinity for camomile, and the smell of the teabags had been so comforting, so distinctly Aziraphale, that Crowley couldn’t find it in himself to ever want to leave, and only did so when he heard the angel in the bookshop proper, using his absurdly outdated rotary telephone to call Crowley’s flat to leave him anxious messages, inquiring as to the demon’s whereabouts, and offering to treat him to the theatre and a nice bottle of something.

“Yeah, uh,” *missed you too*, Crowley almost said, but bit it back behind his teeth before it could embarrass him, “jussst been sssleeping,” he ended with a shrug.

“I do hope it was restful,” said the angel, with painful honesty, “Would you care to go to lunch with me?”

And that was a great deal more forward than the angel usually dared to be.

Huh, looked like he really had been starved of company since Crowley had been napping. Aziraphale almost looked a little bit desperate, actually, blue eyes hopeful and imploring, as if he thought the demon might say no and promptly slither off again for a couple of centuries.

Crowley made a considering sound, wheedling his head back and forth. “S’pose,” he grumbled eventually, enjoying the way the angel’s face lit up at his nonchalant acquiescence as if it were the most wonderful thing he’d ever heard.

“Wonderful!” Aziraphale beamed.

And it was.

They had a light lunch at a local bistro, accompanied by a few bottles of a very good Pinot Noir, topped it off with a few large glasses of brandy at some hellishly dark wine bar, and had stumbled back into the angel’s bookshop with giddy smiles.

Aziraphale had made a big show of getting his key out to open the front door, which was stupid, because the angel didn’t need a key at all, but he was so very pleased with himself at having remembered to bring it with him that he wanted to take the opportunity to actually use it for once.

It also meant that he had put one careful hand on Crowley’s upper arm to steady himself while he aligned the key with the lock, and so the demon had allowed him his silly human rituals.

“I feel I ought to sober up,” mused Aziraphale, with a hand against his forehead, as if he were feeling dizzy.

Which he probably was, because Crowley definitely was, but the demon found that he rather enjoyed the way the bookshelves were spinning gently when he turned his head too fast, like a bizarre merry-go-round.

“Ah,” said Aziraphale, “hmm.”

“Wot?”

The angel poked out the tip of his pink tongue and frowned in concentration. “I can’t seem to... dear me...”

“Angel?”

“Perhaps, I - yes, I rather think I should sit down.”

“Whaswrong?” Asked the demon, suddenly feeling the need to sober up himself, because the angel was looking at him in gentle confusion, as if he’d forgotten something important and was trying to place it. Crowley shuddered, purging the pleasant buzz from his system and guiding Aziraphale to the sofa. “Si’ down, angel.”

Aziraphale was looking at his hand, and his eyebrows were furrowed, “Most peculiar.”

“Huh?” Crowley said, wondering if he should go and raid the angel’s extensive wine collection, or if they should have a snifter of port instead.

“My dear, ah, hmm, I don’t suppose... that is, your serpent form, it wouldn’t happen to be... venomous?”

Crowley stared down at Aziraphale’s hand and suddenly felt like he’d been slapped in the face with it.

The angel’s wrist had taken on a decidedly mottled colour, almost bruised, and the fingers were swollen, pink and plump, and looking for all the world like a partially inflated balloon.

“Angel!” Crowley cried, “What the - what - why didn’t you *say* anything?!”

“I hadn’t noticed,” admitted the angel.

“What?! You’ve been walking around with a bloody blown up *rubber glove* for a hand, and you *didn’t notice*?!”

Aziraphale had the audacity to actually tut at him. “Come now, it doesn’t look quite that terrible. Though, I will admit, it does... sting a little, now that I think about it.”

His golden winged ring that encircled his pinky finger now looked painfully tight, Crowley gently took the angel’s hot fingered hand in his and removed the ring with more than a little demonic miracling involved.

“Thank you,” breathed Aziraphale, gratefully, “Yes, that’s much better.”

Crowley placed the ring on the coffee table, but didn’t let go of the angel’s hand, he inspected it with wide golden eyes.

“Are you?” Aziraphale asked him, interestedly.

“Am I, what?”

“Venomous, my dear.”

He had no fucking idea. “Dunno, never really bit anyone before. Could be.”

“Well then, I suppose I should be honoured to be your first victim,” said Aziraphale, seemingly delighted at the prospect, and looking wholly unconcerned for his own wellbeing, “I believe I have a few books on snakes that may prove useful in this matter. I’ll have to dig them out.”

“Angel,” said Crowley, panicking quite openly now, because one of them had to, “people die from snake bites. All the time.”

“Oh, no, good gracious, no. Not in England,” insisted the angel, looking a little too flushed, and now that Crowley really looked at him, as though his eyes were having trouble focusing. Shit. Shit. Shit. “Not very many dangerous snakes to be found here, only the adder, I believe. And I’m assured they are quite docile, unless provoked. And most beguiling creatures they are too, with a very striking pattern on their scales.”

Crowley, for some unaccountable reason, felt a hot sizzle of jealousy.

Why had the angel been reading up on native snakes? Did he even like snakes? How dare he like other snakes that weren’t him? How dare he go behind Crowley’s back reading up on snakes instead of asking the one being he knew, who actually was a fucking snake?

And then the demon mentally shook himself, bringing himself back to the pressing situation, and dropping Aziraphale’s hand as he growled out, “Angel, are you being deliberately dense? I’m not a bloody common or garden snake, am I? I’m not even an exotic snake! I’m a - a demonic, evil, hellish, apparently very *venomous* one!”

“Oh,” said Aziraphale with a small giggle, using his balloon hand to pat at Crowley’s placatingly, “of course you are, dear, yes. Very intimidating.”

He was such a bastard.

“Angel. You could disincorporate, or - or fucking explode, or something!”

“Well,” said the angel with a long suffering sigh, “I suppose we’d better get on with unearthing those books, if you’re going to make such a fuss about it...”

“Fuck the books!” Crowley already had his phone out, “I’ll google it, just sit there and stop dying.”

“Yes, you have a look at the googles, yes, wonderful idea,” said Aziraphale, as if he knew what on earth Crowley was talking about, while the demon hurriedly scrolled through webpages growing more and more frenzied with each second, “This modern age of technology really is very fascinating.” The angel patted his thighs once, said, “Well,” and then attempted to get up.

Crowley leapt at him. “Oi! Where’d you think you’re going? Sit back down!”

The angel raised his eyebrows, “Crowley, this is my bookshop, I am allowed to move freely about within it, and if you must know, I was thinking of popping the kettle on.”

“Sit down!” Crowley snapped. “Sit down right now, and don’t bloody move!”

That earned him a disgruntled frown. “You’re being quite overbearing, I don’t mind telling you,” said the angel, pompously.

“I’ll show you *overbearing*. Sit down before I make you.”

“Well, really. There’s no need to fret, Crowley, I feel perfectly fine.”

Crowley hissed.

Aziraphale treated him to an impish smile, but then loosened his bow tie with a careful finger, and cleared his throat with a horrible sounding breathy wheeze.

The demon snapped his head up, alarmed. “What was that?”

Aziraphale blinked at him innocently, “What was what?”

“You - you’re *wheezing*! That’s one of the symptoms! It says so, right here! Look!” He brandished the screen at the angel, who didn’t so much as glance at it, “See? Wheezing! Number bloody two! Are you having trouble breathing?”

“Now dear, you know we don’t need to breathe. Perhaps I merely overexerted myself at lunch.”

“Doing *what*? What could you possibly have done at lunch that made your hand fucking five times the size it used to be?!”

Aziraphale considered, “I’m sure I really couldn’t say.” He decided on, primly.

Crowley nearly tore his hair out. “Angel, you’re wheezing because I bit you, I fucking poisoned you, and now you’re - you’re - ngrhh! You’re not wheezing because you ate too much bloody potato dauphinois for lunch!”

“Did you know,” implored the angel, “that anything can be considered a poison if enough of it is ingested? Even potato dauphinois. So presumably, if one did consume enough potato dauphinois, or indeed any food, they could very well become poisoned by it.”

“What an interesting titbit of knowledge,” said Crowley, “please regale me with more of your fucking fascinating useless random facts, I want to push all the important stuff out of my brain!”

The angel sighed, flicking his blue eyes up to the heavens, “You’re really quite impossible to speak to when you’re like this.”

“Oh, *right*, yeah, my fucking mistake, *I’m* the impossible one! Angel, I’m - I’m not the one who’s bloody - sssatan, *you’re* the one who’s bloody impossible! You’re not even listening to me, are you?! I just poisoned you!”

The angel hummed thoughtfully, “I must admit, it does bare some resemblance to that time in... Oh, I don’t suppose that you remember? The turn of the twelfth century, I believe it was. Very careless of me... what was it again, ah, something in the family of nightshade...?”

Let’s see. What event could the angel possibly be alluding to.

Did Crowley remember holding Aziraphale, while the angel choked on air, pallid and cold and trembling. Did he remember feeling completely and utterly useless, unable to heal the angel of the poison that ravaged his earthly body, unable to do anything but hold him, and talk to him, and wipe at his face and lips gently, oh so gently. Until eventually, after hours of struggling to breathe, the angel had finally given up the fight and disincorporated in Crowley’s arms?

Did he remember that.

Nah. ‘Course not. Completely forgotten about it, actually.

He definitely didn’t still have nightmares about it, about those... sounds. All that... gurgling and choking.

Nope. No idea what the angel was harping on about.

“Nyeh.” He managed to say.

“It’s all very bizarre,” continued the angel, apparently not noticing the demon’s distress, “I’m quite aware that I don’t even really need to breathe and yet, when the option is taken away, I do feel it’s loss quite keenly...”

Crowley scrunched up his face and chucked it in a nearby bin.

No amount of snapping his fingers obnoxiously in front of Aziraphale’s face managed to do any bugging thing, so he concluded that using miracles wasn’t an option. Christ, they were fucked.

“Anti venom,” said Aziraphale knowingly, with one eye squinting a little and lips pursed smugly, “that’s precisely what we need. I believe they make it by injecting poor animals with venom and collecting their antibodies, there is quite a fascinating book on the subject over there,” he gestured vaguely, “ah, somewhere over by the... oh dear, I can’t seem to recall

where, well, in any case it all seems rather a complicated process, and one that takes a fair amount of time.”

Crowley listened to him blabber on for as long as he could take, then snapped, “I’m calling the witch.”

“My dear,” tutted the angel, “do you really have to call her that? It’s hardly polite, and she has a rather lovely name -”

“Witch,” growled Crowley, as he jabbed at the appropriate number and stuck the mobile to his ear.

“*Hello?*” Answered the witch.

“I killed the angel,” Crowley said, without preamble.

A long-suffering sigh fluffed the line with static. “*No, you haven’t. If you had, I’m pretty sure you wouldn’t be calling me about it. Be too busy hiding the body. And crying. Now, what’s happened?*”

“Fine... I’m in the process of killing him, then,” amended Crowley, “and before you ask, it was all his fault.”

“Dear, give me the phone, I’ll explain the situation,” Aziraphale was flapping his engorged hand around like a feather duster, Crowley pushed him back down onto the sofa, firmly.

“*Go on...?*”

“I might’ve injected him with some demonic venom. Again, complete accident. And he hid the symptoms, so, you know, I can’t really be blamed. Anyway, now his hand’s blown up like a fucking beach ball, so it looks like we have a problem.”

Aziraphale looked distinctly unamused at not being allowed to have any input on the conversation, especially when said conversation involved him quite intimately. He looked up at the demon with beseeching blue eyes, “Dear, let me speak to her, please.”

Crowley ignored him, pressing the phone to his ear firmly and backing away.

Aziraphale frowned. “Crowley? Did you hear me? I said -”

“I heard you angel. And no, you can’t speak to her. Let me take care of it, you’re an invalid.”

The frown was joined by a pout. “Well, I - I really must insist -”

“I said no, angel.”

“And I, *respectfully*, ask you to reconsider -”

“Hang on a moment, witch,” Crowley grumbled, then he fixed Aziraphale with a look he like to refer to as *‘not in the mood for your bullshit, but feel free to try your luck, and see how that*

turns out for you, really, make my fucking day’. It caused most lesser demons to run for the hills with their pointed tail between their hooves, but obviously, Aziraphale had to be bloody stubborn about it. And even raised his chin in challenge.

“Angel,” Crowley said, looking over the top of his sunglasses to fully get the point across, “what part of *no*, did you not understand?”

The frown and pout that wrinkled the angel’s face were further escalated by the appearance of an annoyed glare. Crowley shivered at the sight, but refused to give up the mobile.

“My dear,” The angel intoned, in a dangerous voice, that while soft, still contained within it a certain edge of heavenly steel, “I can’t say that I particularly care for your tone.”

“I can’t say I care for your tooone,” mimicked Crowley with his forked tongue poked out and his yellow eyes going off in opposite directions. Because when faced with fear, the demon’s first thought was to make fun of it.

“That’s it!” Aziraphale huffed, “Give me the telephone at once!”

“No.”

“Give me the -”

“Would you - just - ngggrrkk!”

They grappled over the phone like a pair of seagulls squabbling over a chip.

“Get off!” grunted Crowley.

Aziraphale’s hot sausage fingers grasped over the demon’s own with surprising ferocity.

“You’re overdramatising the entire situation!” the angel squeaked out, incensed, “Which not only might cause undue alarm, but also could leave things open to misinterpretation. Now, if you would just kindly let go for one second, and let me explain -”

“Bugger off, angel!”

More grappling, sweat was now quite evidently glimmering on the angel’s forehead. Crowley was a demon, and therefore it was acceptable for him to fight a little dirty, this is the justification he soothed himself with as one of his notoriously pointy elbows jabbed into the angel’s gut, none too gently, and in actual fact, with great aplomb.

“Oof!” cried the angel, letting go with one hand to press against his tender belly, “Oh, Crowley, really now. That is enough!”

“That is enuff!” parroted Crowley, in a high pitched warble that sounded just like the flustered angel, actually, shut up.

“Listen here, you *ridiculous* creature -”

Crowley danced away, light on his feet, and wagging the phone about just out of reach, “Oh! Oh, ridiculous, am I! Ridiculous?! This coming from the idiot with a bloody watermelon for a hand!”

“How *dare* you!”

“Hehe!”

“Give me the telephone, this instant, Crowley!”

“No.”

“Give it to me, or I’ll - I’ll -”

“You’ll what? Go on. Watcha gonna do? Smite me?”

“Well - well! I’m not above smiting you, actually, I could very well smite you, if I so wished!”

“Pffff! Whatever. You wouldn’t dare, angel.”

“I would, I very much would - don’t test me, you wicked creature -”

“Oh, and witch?” Crowley addressed Anathema, talking obnoxiously loudly, “You listening? He’s being an interfering twat too, might be a symptom. Worth noting it down, just in case. Write down - *‘shows signs of being a total insufferable bastard.’* Also - also! Oi - geroff me - also, probably dying!” Crowley managed to yell into the phone, before Aziraphale wrestled it away with a contrite yelp.

“Good gracious! Don’t tell her that! You’ll only worry the poor dear -”

Crowley had one hand splayed over the angel’s shoulder and forcibly shoved him into the sofa cushions with it, putting every ounce of demonic strength behind the action for good measure, to stop him from attempting to get back up. “Shut it, angel. Don’t make me bind you with my superior hellish powers.”

He snatched the phone out of suddenly unresponsive fingers, just in time to hear the sound of Anathema flicking through some pages, probably already researching, if she had any sense.

“*Demonic venom?*” Anathema pondered aloud, seemingly unaffected by the angel and demon’s little snit. She’d been privy to enough of them. “*Hmm. I’ll have a look, see what I can dig up. Is it from a snake?*”

“Yep.”

Aziraphale stopped wiggling quite so much and put a plump hand over his eyes in defeat. He didn’t look well. He was definitely wheezing now. Crowley refused to feel bad about it. Except he might be feeling that, just a smidge.

“*From you?*” The witch clarified in his ear.

“Yep,” said Crowley.

And Anathema didn't ask the obvious, didn't ask him how the hell that had happened, didn't ask why the hell he had bitten the angel. She just treated him to a brisk, *“All right. Bring him over, and don't let him do anything strenuous, for god's sake.”*

And Crowley, similarly, didn't say thank you. They had an understanding. Or a mutual hatred. He couldn't tell which, and liked the idea of both. He made a noncommittal sound in his throat and hung up.

“There was no need to be so rude to her,” lamented the angel, wetly, “she really has been very kind to us. Lord only knows why she puts up with you.”

“Whatever,” he poked the angel in the ribs, “Get up, angel, we're going for a ride.”

Aziraphale didn't move, if anything he sunk deeper into the sofa cushions. The angel looked startlingly pale now, eyes glassy and unaware, and his hand looking bloody awful. Like a cross between a blimp and something you might find in a horror film bursting through the soil of a grave. Christ, he took so much sodding looking after.

“Actually,” the angel gasped, “I had hoped to lie down for a bit. I find myself a trifle tired. Yes, perhaps we should call it a night.”

Crowley folded his arms. “Nope. Bentley. Now.”

“I'll be all right in a minute,” insisted Aziraphale, attempting an annoyed look but ending up looking pained, “Don't fuss. I just had a little too much to drink, I think. Yes. I'll see you in the morning.”

Wha - what did the angel take him for? The idiot was sitting there, looking like - like *that*, trying to none-too-politely tell the demon to bugger off and leave him to be poisoned to death - had he lost his bloody marbles? “Angel, this isn't up for discussion! Get up already, we're leaving.”

Aziraphale remained seated, blinking at nothing.

Crowley wrangled the angel upright, onto his wobbly feet, ignoring the mumbled protests at the manhandling of his dear waistcoat. Then the demon turned about, heading to the front of the shop and expecting the angel to follow.

After a few steps, he realised this wasn't the case.

Aziraphale was just standing there, looking lost.

And Crowley wasn't worried in the slightest, all right? He really wasn't. He was angry. Furious, actually. Because it was just like the angel to stand around, faffing about, when he was bloody poisoned, wasn't it? The absolute bastard. Oh, he loved inciting this sort of panic in the demon, didn't he? Enjoyed seeing Crowley nearly have a heart attack and die.

“We haven’t got time for this,” Crowley snapped, fanged teeth bared in a snarl, “You want a lift or what? You can bloody walk all the way to Tadfield if you like, s’no skin off my nose - !”

Aziraphale’s eyelids drooped, alarmingly.

And that was all the warning the angel gave before he was swaying sideways, and Crowley madly darting to catch him.

Chapter End Notes

Please let me know whether you like the tone of the story - if you think it’s worth continuing, or you prefer the angst ;) Thanks so much for reading! I really appreciate it :)

Of Mischief and Misery

Chapter Notes

Holy Hell, that's the best response I've ever had! Thank you! I am completely overwhelmed by your kind praise, and definitely unworthy of it. I'm actually a bit terrified to post this in case it doesn't live up to your expectations. But, oh well, here goes nothing :)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The streets of Soho, as always, were swarming with people.

Shoppers with bulging bags full of overpriced tat were shuffling along the pavement in throngs, tourists were paying more attention to their phones than their surroundings, mad locals were darting across the road with no care for the incoming traffic, and drunken revellers were singing loudly and obnoxiously. There were stag parties with the requisite blow up sheep, and hen dos with what was certainly not appropriate attire for viewing before the watershed. Not to mention a pack of screaming children that were being wrangled by their understandably stressed parents down into the nearest tube station entrance.

Basically, it was complete chaos.

And usually, Crowley would be in his element here. Among the hustle and bustle of mad London life. Usually, he would be out there, sowing his own mischief and discord, with a wicked grin on his face and the warm satisfaction in his serpentine belly of a job well done (or badly done, as the case may be). But not today.

Today, he was having a bit of a rough time of it.

An angel and a demon were currently attempting to cross the street to the waiting Bentley. And Crowley had his hands full, literally.

"Oh my god!" Cried one of the aforementioned bystanders, one of the women on a hen do by the looks of it, who was wrapped in a pink feather boa, learner license plate, and questionably shaped anatomical plastic jewellery. "Is your friend all right?"

"He's tickety fucking *boo*," grunted the demon, with an armful of comatose angel. He was currently trying to keep Aziraphale from clonking his precious head on the pavement, and didn't have the patience for a chat. "Now sod off."

"Do you need help?! Oi, Deidre! Come over here, I think this young man needs help!"

Another well-meaning idiot human popped up next to the first, a hand to her mouth in shock. "Oh dear! He doesn't look well, does he? Quick! Someone call an ambulance!"

Buggering *bollocks*. When had Londoners gotten so damn concerned about other people?! Never, that was when. He remembered the good old days, when you could lug around a body with no questions asked.

Maybe this was just one of those weird Aziraphale things, where humans felt obligated to help the angel whenever he was in danger. That would be just like the bastard, making Crowley's life miserable even when he was unconscious.

Crowley would say that it was an angelic thing, the whole 'inspiring compassion in humankind' thing, but it really wasn't. The only thing the other angels evoked in the humans, was a sense of deep-seated unease, as if they were made aware of a sudden predator in their midst and didn't know whether to run away, shit themselves, or keel over in fright. Sometimes, all three.

Yet, when faced with Aziraphale and his twee little bow tie, fussy mannerisms, and penchant for cream cakes with raspberry jam, they were suddenly of the impression that this ridiculous angel was a completely trustworthy individual, who might be in need of assistance. They often likened him to a slightly incompetent grandfather.

It was something Aziraphale was usually pleased as punch about. *Goodness, aren't they quaint*, he would gush, *really quite lovely! Do you see Crowley, how kindness is often its own reward?* That was all well and good, when the angel was being given boiled sweets and helped across the road, yeah, but when the humans misinterpreted this lack of fear and judgement to mean that they could enter the angel's bookshop and try to buy his books, well, then the angel found it quite inconvenient indeed.

And it was even more bloody inconvenient now. Fuck's sake. Couldn't Crowley drag an unconscious angel out of his shop in peace without being accosted?!

He'd scuffed Aziraphale's perfectly polished shoes against the pavement as well, maybe purposefully, maybe not, and if the angel ever woke up he'd never forgive the demon for that. Served him right for conking out and leaving Crowley to drag him haphazardly to the car.

A small crowd of humans had gathered now. Crowley was at his wit's end. And Aziraphale, as usual, was no bloody help at all.

No doubt Someone Up There was having a good old laugh at his expense right now.

"Look would you just *sod off*, the lot of you! There's nothing to see! He's fine, I'm fine, we're all fucking fine!" The demon yelled, "Go on, bugger off!" and when they inevitably didn't heed his advice, Crowley promptly turned his head into that of a terrifying fanged demonic snake's and hissed bloody murder at them.

The do-gooders soon scarpered off with startled yelps, shopping bags and their miscellaneous contents scattering in their wake. An inflatable sheep drifted to the ground and promptly burst.

That was better. Served them bloody right for sticking their noses into other people's completely normal business.

“Oh, don’t look at me like that,” he told Aziraphale’s slack face, “they had it coming.”

Why did the angel have to be so bloody difficult to manoeuvre?! He was a complete dead weight with awkwardly floppy beige limbs, and his hair smelt amazing, and he was soft in all sorts of places that Crowley really shouldn’t be touching, because he was completely and wholly undeserving of them.

The angel’s skin dimpled pleasantly under his fingers. It *dimpled*, for Christ’s sake. How was he supposed to ever look Aziraphale in the eye again, with that sort of forbidden sordid knowledge swimming around in his brain?

And yes, it would have been much easier, he knew, to miracle them both straight into the car. He wasn’t a complete idiot, thank you very much. And he wasn’t using this as an excuse to hold the angel. Shut up.

Honestly, the demon dared not use any further hellish powers trying to transport Aziraphale about the place, in case he somehow exacerbated the spread of the poison. One wrong click of Crowley’s fingers and that could be it. Who knew what a demonic miracle could do to the angel in his condition.

So Crowley just stuffed the unresisting body into the Bentley as best he could and grumbled loudly about it.

He tried, unsuccessfully, to close the door a few times. In the end, he heaved his full weight behind a forceful shove, before it properly clicked shut, because the angel’s drooping coat, or lolling leg, or sweaty face, kept getting in the way and trying to fall out.

It was, in short, an absolute nightmare. And they hadn’t even made it off the street outside the bookshop yet.

Finally, fucking *finally*, Crowley wrenched open the driver’s side door and got in.

He breathed a sigh of relief, letting his head fall back, as he wiped his brow.

Well, thank fuck that was over.

Now all he had to do was -

HONK!

Holy *shit*! Crowley jumped so hard he hit his head on the car roof.

Oof! Goddamnit, come on! Give him a break.

The Bentley continued to honk her horn at him and flash her lights.

Crowley groaned aloud, rubbing at his cranium as he turned the key in her ignition and flattened his foot against the accelerator to no avail. He pumped his leg up and down, practically jumping on the pedal.

She just sat there. Honking like a grouchy old goose.

And yep, of course that was attracting unwanted attention, wasn't it? Of course pedestrians were starting to turn and look and point at the misbehaving car and its celestial occupants. One of whom was starting to smoulder in a volatile mixture of fury and self pity, and the other who looked like he'd recently been stolen out of a hearse.

Why. Why was it always *Crowley* that had to deal with this shit? He knew he was damned to a life of eternal torment, but that was just an occupational hazard, and he'd pretty much been fired anyway. Surely he hadn't done anything, recently, that he could think of, to deserve this kind of nightmarish torture?

"Nghhhh," Crowley bemoaned, beseeching the Bentley with everything he had left, "not you too! Look, I've had a very trying day, just go. Go, for Christ's sake, before any more residents notice I've kidnapped their beloved angel and try and tip you over or something. They're like rioting villagers, I swear to Sssatan!"

Of course, The Bentley refused to go anywhere without further explanation. She was stubborn like that.

And overprotective.

The window on the passenger side wound down a little, to let in a breeze that ruffled Aziraphale's bedraggled white curls. The seat sloped backwards gently with a couple of creaking clicks, and the lines on the angel's face eased as he reclined against the weathered leather.

She was making him comfortable. Always coddling the daft old sod. He'd be spoiled rotten, if she had her way.

Crowley swallowed, working his jaw. Wondering what the hell the best way to get out of this was, without further incriminating himself, and earning the Bentley's ire. "He's asleep, all right?" The demon said, trying to sound nonchalant, which was kind of difficult when his hair was on fire. "Having a nap, that's all. Just leave it."

Honk! retorted the Bentley, quite articulately, for a car.

"Yes, I know he doesn't sleep, but today he's made an exception, now just shut it, all right, or you'll wake him up."

Honk?!

"What do you mean, what did *I* do? Why do you just assume it had something to do with *me*? It wasn't my bloody fault!"

Honk.

"All right, fine, okay, so I might've poisoned him," admitted Crowley, because, fuck it, they didn't have time for this, "a little bit, but -"

HONK?!

“It’s fine! It’s bloody fine! I’m handling it! We’re going to the witch now - look, would you just shut up for one sodding minute, I can’t hear myself think!” He shouted, and the Bentley fell silent. “... Right. Thank you. *Christ.*”

In the quietude that followed, punctuated only by Aziraphale’s awful wheezing, the full extent of the situation suddenly hit him. Crowley turned wild yellow eyes on the Bentley’s rear view mirror.

“Oh shit. Oh, shit shit shit. What if I’ve killed him,” he breathed, in startled realisation, “I mean, bollocks, fuck, maybe I’ve properly gone and actually killed him. And - and just when we were finally settling down. Last week he... he patted me on the shoulder, and called me dearest. *Dearest.* He’s never done that before. That’s groundbreaking, that is. That’s a potential precursor to *other endearments*, that is. Hell, give us another thousand years and we could’ve escalated to actual physical contact, maybe even *hand-holding*. But no. No, I had to kill him, didn’t I? I’ve only gone and bloody ruined everything by murdering the stupid bastard, haven’t I? Fucking *great.*”

HONK.

Crowley sniffed and looked away sharply, wrangling his lips into something less pathetic looking. “I’m not being dramatic. You’re being dramatic. You know what? You’re really not helping the whole shitty situation at all, actually, you great big lump of potential scrap metal. Now, if you could just - just get us to the bloody witch before I genuinely lose it and set myself, and you, on fire, that would be great.”

They had a ten second standoff.

“... Please,” Crowley grumbled, begrudgingly.

The Bentley started her engine but refused to budge.

“Of course I didn’t bloody mean the bit about the scrap metal,” hissed Crowley, glad that the angel wasn’t able to hear him, “You’re the second love of my life, you know that.”

The Bentley generously accepted his grovelling. And then they were off like a shot.

Crowley pretended that he was the one driving.

If he were honest with himself, however, he spent the whole time gripping the steering wheel so hard that it bent around his recently manifested claws, stealing charged glances of the sickly angel, and causing bits of the Bentley’s carpet to smoke before stomping the embers out with his snakeskin boot.

She didn’t even seem to notice the small outbreak of flames, such was her singleminded focus on getting the angel to their intended destination and, hopefully, potential cure.

It started to rain, and the Bentley’s windscreen wipers sluiced back and forth so fast it almost looked like she was trying to take flight.

A good ten minutes into the drive, the angel stirred. His cheek was squashed into the Bentley's head rest and his face was all wrong. Blank looking. And it wasn't the usual, carefree, daydreaming sort of look he sometimes affected when in the throws of a good book, but a slack, sickly grimace instead. It was horrible. Crowley hated it. He wanted to jab at it with a finger.

"Mmm," mumbled Aziraphale, intelligently, wrinkling his nose.

Crowley just stared at him. He felt like his eyes might be bugging out of his skull.

How long did snake bites usually take to kill someone? Could he be driving all the way to that insufferable witch, only to present her with a recently deceased angel by the time they got there? Explain that oops, unfortunately, Aziraphale had up and snuffed it on the way to her house, and it was all her fault for living so sodding far away, and by the by, did she happen to have any cursed weapons that he could quickly and painfully off himself with, because he had no further reason to continue this miserable existence alone. Ta.

"Mzzzmmm," interrupted the angel, and it looked as though he might be drooling a little.

Hell's sake, dribble should not be endearing. It really shouldn't.

Ssssatan help him, it was though.

He had it *bad*.

Crowley reached over and tugged the ever present handkerchief out of Aziraphale's breast pocket, using it to wipe at the corner of the angel's lip. Had Aziraphale been in his right mind, he would have been mortified at his own lack of propriety. The angel was forever cautiously dabbing at his mouth with a napkin between careful dainty mouthfuls, because Heaven forbid a pastry crumb or droplet of wine should stray there. He had manners, after all.

If he thought Crowley had caught him drooling on the Bentley's upholstery, Aziraphale would probably be very upset. Hell, he'd be borderline hysterical with the shame of it. Even when the idiot was currently in the process of being poisoned to death, he'd wring his hands together, affect a wide-eyed forlorn expression, and whimper *Dear boy, I'm ever so sorry you had to see me in such a ghastly state, but if you ever tell anyone about this I will never forgive you*.

Don't mistake him, Crowley wasn't wiping gently at Aziraphale's mouth to be kind. Like some sort of... doting old fool. He was a demon. And it just meant that he got to take his hands off the wheel for a bit, and Aziraphale really hated it when he did that. So sod him.

"You awake?" Crowley poked, "Oi, angel. You still alive?"

Aziraphale opened pink-rimmed eyes, which didn't focus at all on the demon's face. And well, wasn't that disturbing as Hell. "Mmm," the angel managed.

"Right," grumbled Crowley, returning his attention to the steering wheel with deadly intent, and steadfastly ignoring the road signs and other cars, as he barrelled obnoxiously down the

road with the delicacy of a bowling bowl. “Great. Let me know when you’ve rejoined the land of the living, will you? It’s like talking to a bloody kazoo.”

After a few minutes, the angel seemed capable of stringing a coherent sentence together.

“Are we... going for a drive?” Aziraphale slurred, blinking at him with those hooded eyelids.

Crowley raised his eyebrows, resisting the urge to gesture at the car they were currently sat in and the surroundings as they blatantly whizzed by.

“No,” he drawled, “I thought we’d go fucking scuba diving.”

“Scuba diving,” murmured the angel, sleepily, “marvellous.”

“On Jupiter,” continued the demon through clenched teeth.

“Jupiter,” agreed Aziraphale, “wonderful.”

“Yeah. That’s what I thought too. And why don’t we take Gabriel with us? Make a day of it, play some badminton, using that prat as the shuttlecock. Just smack at him with the rackets until he disincorporates. Sound good to you, angel?”

Aziraphale nodded dozily at him. He looked like he’d spent the afternoon getting absolutely smashed, and was now bordering on dangerously paralytic. He’d looked like that before, over the years. But sobriety was usually only a snap away. Not so, this time. “Shplendid,” Aziraphale slurred, happily, then he tried again with a small frown of concentration, “*splendid*.”

Upon getting it right that time, the angel sprouted a hopelessly pleased, albeit very wobbly, smile.

No one had the right to look that utterly adorable. It was disgusting. Within the realms of those sickly Get Well Soon cards - the ones that had fluffy ducklings and pink-nosed kittens, sitting in a goddamn wicker basket, the image diffused through a soft lens filter and lit by warm sunlight, with fucking sparkly glitter bits in the background. It made Crowley want to strangle something.

“Angel,” the demon breathed, scowling at the windscreen because he couldn’t look at Aziraphale any longer, “tell it to me straight. I can take it. Are you, or are you not, completely fucking loopy right now?”

The angel made a snorting noise and then burst into a plethora of breathy wet giggles, which didn’t exactly fill the demon with confidence.

“... I’ll take that as a yes, then.” He grumbled.

“You,” Aziraphale said, between huffs of wheezing air, “are so lovely,” his uninjured hand found its way to the side of Crowley’s face in an awkward fumbling pat, “you’re so very very lovely.”

The hand kept patting at him, lovingly, and Crowley sat there and took it, because of course he did. Those hands were so fucking soft, he'd be mad to move. This was the most they'd touched in years.

Aziraphale's thumb swept over Crowley's cheekbone, in a painstakingly gentle caress that had Crowley abruptly swerving the Bentley into another lane, earning him several honks from the other cars.

"I ought to tell you more often," said Aziraphale, completely ignorant of the chaos he'd just caused, "just how very lovely you are."

Right.

Fair to say, the angel had fucking lost it.

Crowley thumped his head into the steering wheel, seven or eight times in quick succession.

Aziraphale patted him on the top of his head, instead. Humming a little with contentment.

After a while Crowley just had to say it. Or he'd go mad. Maybe there was still enough of the angel's brain left to understand him. "I'm sorry. You know I'm sorry, right?"

"Of course," mumbled the angel, his hand had flopped down at some point, and he was now snuggling back into the seat. "For what?"

Crowley scrunched his eyes up. "For killing you," he bit out.

"Oh dear," said Aziraphale with some confusion, "am I dead?"

Crowley sniffed a bit, and wiped at his nose with his sleeve. "Not yet," he managed to get out, miserably. But it was only a matter of time. Aziraphale ought to see himself. He looked awful.

"Well, that's certainly a relief." The angel sighed, with a kind crinkle of his eyes. He looked completely unconcerned and, well, that just made it that much worse. "Thank goodness for that."

"I said *'yet'*." Crowley's said, wretchedly.

A stern wrinkle furrowed Aziraphale's brow. The kind reserved for customers who attempted to convince him to part with something he didn't want to. He suddenly seemed much more awake, and in what the demon liked to refer to as 'obstinate mode'.

"Forgive me, my dear," the angel said, which usually meant he didn't want to be forgiven at all. Crowley raised an eyebrow in anticipation. "If you're implying that my demise is imminent," Aziraphale countered, with a familiar stubbornness, "then I'm afraid I'll have to disagree with you."

Crowley blinked. "You're... disagreeing with me?"

The angel looked as if he'd made up his mind, lips pursing in familiar annoyance. "Of course. It's quite out of the question. I simply can't possibly entertain you today, Death."

"Aziraphale," Crowley said, incredulously, letting out a breathy laugh, "You can't just - just tell Death to *bugger off*!"

Though if anyone could, it would be his angel.

Crowley could just see it now. Aziraphale glaring out of the bookshop window at the rapidly approaching figure of Death, with his dark foreboding wings, and skull of bleached bone and fetid flesh. The angel would click his tongue exasperatedly and say *Oh, really! This is most inconvenient! And he didn't even have the decency to call beforehand! Dear me, what on Earth are the horsepeople coming to?*

Then he would snap all of the blinds closed, sulkily, and steadfastly lock the door. Upon Death materialising in front of the angel in a poof of coiling black smoke, as was his wont, Aziraphale would stare him down, and pointedly offer the spectre of doom a nice cup of tea that he had no intention of making, before politely and terrifyingly, convincing Death to apologise for the untimely intrusion.

Then the angel would probably have the audacity to shoo Death out the door too.

"Of course I can," scoffed Aziraphale, and the demon believed him. He really did. "Crowley would be most upset with me if I left."

Well, yeah, that was an understatement. If Aziraphale up and died without him, the demon would be fucking inconsolable. "Oh, he'd be *pissed*, believe me," agreed Crowley, a little wetly.

"Exactly," hummed Aziraphale, "and just when we were finally starting to..." he trailed off, with a dopey smile on his face.

"To what?" Crowley asked, when the angel failed to continue. His heart thudded loudly in his ears at the numerous possible endings of that sentence, that were suddenly, teasingly, coming to mind.

"Hmm?" hummed Aziraphale, absently.

"Starting to what?"

Aziraphale blinked at him, stupidly. His periods of lucidity were apparently very conveniently placed. "What?"

Crowley hissed out a strained breath between fanged teeth. "*Angel*. You said 'just when we were starting to', and then you trailed off, fucking enigmatically, so please, for the sake of my sanity, what were you going to say? Just when we were starting to *what?!?*"

"Hmmp. Don't get miffed with me, Azrael, I shan't put up with it," the angel huffed, closing his eyes and laying his head back down on the head rest. "Now, if that was the sole reason for your visit, then I'm afraid... I'm going to have to... ask you to leave."

“You - you -” Crowley mewled, exasperatedly, “you impossibly beautiful *bastard*.”

The angel’s response came in the form of a soft snore.

And sod it all, Crowley had never loved him more.

He had been so up to his snakey eyeballs in worry, that he’d failed to take into account Aziraphale’s bloody-minded stubbornness when faced with a task that he didn’t want to do. If the angel was unwilling to even entertain the thought of something, then he would simply find away around it. He was like that, sometimes. Completely impossible.

The Bentley cradled him in her seat, turned on the heating that she shouldn’t have, and trundled on.

Somehow, the angel was still alive, and had even snorted his way back into bleary-eyed consciousness, when they finally parked at the witch’s cottage. Which wasn’t very witchy at all now Crowley got a good look at it. No captive children that he could see, no gingerbread, and no ominous green and purple smoke chugging out of the chimney pots. He was a bit disappointed, really.

“Are we here?” Aziraphale mumbled when they lurched to a stop. Which was a stupid thing to say, because where else would they bloody be?

Crowley opened his door and stepped onto the curb, careful to avoid the Bentley’s poor tyres which had all but melted into four globs of smelly smoking rubber. He patted her on the hood. “I love you,” he said, in no uncertain terms.

The angel, somehow, managed to get out of the car under his own steam. Even though Crowley had insisted that the idiot stay put until he came round to get him.

He was very, worryingly, unsteady, though. In fact, he looked one gentle breeze away from total collapse. One ballooned hand rested on top of the Bentley’s shiny black roof and the other was stroking affectionately at her window, as if she were a large black cat.

The Bentley even let out a grumble of her engine, in a low pleased purr. Fuck, she was ridiculous.

“Thank you, my dear,” the angel was whispering to her, earnestly. And oh yeah. Oh right. Sure. Thank the Bentley, why don’t you. Where was Crowley’s goddamn thanks?! Why would he deserve any gratitude for hauling the angel around the place, listening to him snore all the way here, and managing not to have a panic attack yet? No, no, quite right. Thank the *Bentley*. Ungrateful prick.

Aziraphale almost lost himself gazing at his distorted reflection in a nearby puddle on the road, before Crowley pulled on his uninjured arm impatiently and lugged him towards the cottage.

The angel then promptly fell sideways into a rose bush, and at that point in the proceedings, Crowley had had enough.

He reached down to untangle the fool from the thorns and heaved him up, bodily, over his shoulder, in a fireman's lift.

It was at this juncture, as he attempted to weave unsteadily up the garden path on a pair of snakey hips, that he realised just how cold the angel was.

Fucking freezing, actually.

Aziraphale's pasty white skin was like ice to the touch. When had that happened? He hadn't even been paying attention - had Aziraphale been this cold just moments ago? Was it uncomfortable? How long had he been fucking freezing his halo off without Crowley noticing?

A new tingle of unwanted panic crept up the back of Crowley's neck. He decided to leg it up to the door as fast as he could manage, which wasn't all that fast, burdened as he was with the heavy angel once again.

Aziraphale really owed him for all of this carting him around business, he wasn't a pack horse you know. But it was faster than waiting for the angel to shuffle along like a pensioner. The sooner they got to the witch, the sooner Aziraphale would be back to normal and wouldn't keep scaring the crap out of him every five minutes with horrifying new symptoms of impending death.

"Crowley?" The angel said, wonderingly, as he was unceremoniously carried like a sack of spuds. His voice was oddly muffled by the demon's jacket, "Dear me. I don't believe I've ever witnessed you from this angle before."

The demon adjusted his grip, and had just put one snakeskin heel to the stone of the porch, when -

When -

Aziraphale's cold hand slid upwards, and gently patted him on the bottom.

Crowley stiffened.

Immediately, and in pure, unadulterated terror. All of his muscles clenched at once, including the one that the angel currently still had a icy palm on.

Well. Well, this was certainly fucking unprecedented.

He let out a quiet strangled noise.

"Aziraphale," Crowley managed to force out between gritted teeth, tightening his grip on the angel's legs. He couldn't believe he was about to question this. It went against everything he'd ever wanted in life. It physically pained him to spit out the words. "What are you doing?"

Aziraphale let out a breathy, delighted giggle in response, and then he very slowly, and very deliberately, pinched one of the demon's cheeks between a pudgy thumb and finger.

Crowley, understandably, jumped a fucking mile.

Such was his surprise that he nearly dropped the angel, and only a last minute desperate grapple saved Aziraphale from planting face first into another sodding rose bush.

Crowley had now escalated from shock, to sheer white-knuckled panic.

What - what had just happened?! Had the angel actually - ? No. No way. Nope. He couldn't have. Except yes. Holy bugging Heaven. Shit. Bollocks. He definitely had. Because Crowley still felt the tiny throbbing sting of pinched flesh - and Aziraphale was still giggling in that, *I've been awfully naughty, but isn't it perfectly marvellous* sort of way. It was the same high-pitched chortle that had tinkled out of him, when relating to Crowley how he'd cheekily asked the Archangel Michael for a towel.

Fuck, *fuck*. What should he do?!

Should he acknowledge it? Ignore it? Tell the angel off? No, no - not the last one. That might deter Aziraphale from doing it again, and actually, truthfully, it had felt wonderful. Christ, he was terrible for thinking it felt wonderful, wasn't he? He needed to do something though, say something, anything would be better than just standing there like a terrified soon-to-be-splatted-across-the-motorway deer.

It really didn't help that the angel was currently snickering into Crowley's lower back, and nuzzling at it with his cold nose. The absolute bastard. This was all his fault!

No, no, no no no, he didn't mean that - Christ. The angel was clearly not in his right mind right now. Wasn't his fault in the slightest.

Oh, shit. Wait. Did that mean it was *Crowley* that was... taking advantage? By enjoying getting groped by a delirious angel?

Aziraphale didn't know what he was doing. He was ill, poisoned, not even able to stand upright by himself. The angel definitely wasn't capable of consenting, even if he was quite enthusiastically initiating. He couldn't possibly be aware of the dastardly devilishly evil thoughts he was inspiring in the demon's blackened mind.

Crowley felt a hot swell of familiar bubbling guilt.

Great. He was awful, wasn't he? Just the absolute scum of the Earth, really. A damned demon through and through. He shouldn't want Aziraphale to grab himself a handful with those sinfully soft hands. He shouldn't want the angel to keep tittering joyously away, and wiggling as if he were enjoying himself immensely. He shouldn't want any of that. But he did. Obviously.

Oh, fuck this.

Crowley scrunched his eyes up and kicked at the witch's front door with a sudden renewed urgency, nearly booting it off its hinges in his haste. He probably would have managed it too, if not for that protective horseshoe above it sapping at his powers.

“Witch!” He yelled out, desperately, “For the love of all that’s unholy! Open up!”

The poor demon didn’t know how much more of this day that he could take.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for taking the time to read this, you make me ridiculously happy. As always your comments and kudos are greatly appreciated :)

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